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U.S.-EGYPT SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY JOINT FUND QUARTERLY REPORT

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS)

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Acronyms

DSC	Development, Security, and Cooperation Unit
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
OES	The Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
STC	OES's Office of Science and Technology Cooperation
STDF	Science and Technology Development Fund

Executive Summary

During this reporting period, the NAS Program Officer traveled to Egypt and met with Egyptian government as well as U.S. government (Embassy and USAID) stakeholders in Cairo. As a first step in resuming Joint Fund activities, STDF and NAS agreed on announcing two grants, Junior Scientist Development Visit and a Collaborative Research Grant, and established announcement and deadline dates upon receipt of signed commitment letter from MoSR Minister Dr. Sherif Hammad. NAS and STDF began discussions on using the STDF web platform as one proposal submission site. NAS program website was created providing general program information and a link to the STDF website for application download and upload. Required reports have been submitted to AOR.

Part 1: Description of Key Activities

1.1 FY 15 Q2 Progress Summary

Program Planning

- January 12-15, 2015 planning trip to Cairo Egypt with OES/STC.
 - NAS program officer met with representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA), International Cooperation (MIC), Scientific Research (MoSR), and Science and Technology Development Fund (STDF). All expressed interest in this program resuming on the U.S. side and recommended four priority research areas – agriculture, water, energy, and health – for the 2015 Cycle XVII announcement with STDF recommending a fifth on ICT applications.
 - Half-day meeting with USAID-Egypt staff, who provided program history, project information, and guidance on required reporting elements.
 - Half-day meeting with STDF - we agreed to limit the Cycle XVII RFA to two grant activities: Collaborative Research Grant and the Junior Scientist Development Visit. Maximum funding ceiling for the collaborative research grant was raised from \$30,000 to \$200,000 each side (\$400,000 combined total) and to increase the Junior Scientist grant to \$25,000-\$30,000. Tentative announcement (mid-late February) and deadline (late April) dates were discussed and STDF recommended allowing two months as adequate time to prepare proposals. We agreed to begin RFA revision discussions via email and Skype. STDF was amenable to using their on-line proposal submission platform versus having each side send proposals to two separate email accounts.
- Multiple Skype discussions in February and March with STDF to finalize the 2015 RFA language, to raise the Junior Scientist Grant maximum to \$30,000/application, and to review technical issues about the on-line platform.
- Change in RFA announcement and closing date to March 18 and May 12 respectively upon receipt of signed commitment letter by MOSR Minister Dr. Sherif Hammad supporting resumption of the program and agreeing to priority areas.
- NAS staff, DSC Executive Director, and Program Officer met with STC staff on January 26 to discuss how to roll out innovation activities through this program. Both sides agreed that further discussions would be necessary.

Administrative

- Work Plan and budget submitted to USAID on February 11.
- FY 2015 Q2 accrual report submitted on March 17.
- The Joint S&T Fund webpage www.nationalacademies.org/egypt was created and became live on March 18 announcing Cycle 17 call with a deadline date of May 12. The website contains general program information about the announcement as well as a link to the STDF website and an alumni directory page with listing of prior grantees and project titles.
- A general program email address was also created at usegyptjointfund@nas.edu and we are responding to inquiries from applicants.

Plans for Next Quarter

- Agree on an administrative processing checklist of proposals and continue to clarify any procedural or policy issues with STDF.
- Respond to last minute email inquiries from applicants as deadline date of May 12 nears.

- After deadline, download excel file of submitted proposals and review with STDF to generate agreed final proposal list.
- Based on agreed list, begin searching for potential reviewers. Begin initial contact to determine availability and interest.
- Prepare and submit quarterly progress report and accrual report.